

Editorial Journal of European Landscapes

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Received 3 October 2019 | Accepted 16 December 2019 | Published 8 May 2020

The vast majority of landscape research has for a long time been local, regional or, at most, national. This was in line with landscape policies that also were organised within regional or national frameworks. This is changing only slowly, but in recent years the interest in an international perspective is growing. A recent project even aims at a world-wide perspective on landscape.¹

For this reason, the editors felt the time was right for a new journal that offers a platform for international exchange on landscape studies, particularly aiming to address aspects of heritage and history within a European context.

Between the national and the global, the European level speaks out, for three reasons.

1. Landscape is a European invention

The concept of landscape developed from two different directions. Ever since the Middle Ages, the term 'landscape' has developed in Germanic languages as a term for a region, related to the management of that region. Examples are the German *Landschaft*, which is still in use for regional authorities that are involved in planning and environmental management, such as the *Ostfriesische Landschaft* and the *Landschaftsverband Rheinland*. In Sweden, regions are still known as *Landskap*.

The second meaning of landscape is visual, close to 'scenery'. This meaning developed during the Renaissance, when painters from the Low Countries started to make pictures of the environment and called these paintings: *landschappen*. Gradually, the term landscape also came to mean the depicted scene itself, giving the term *landschap* a visual meaning. From the Low Countries, this word was re-introduced to England and became *landscape*. As the perception of landscapes is not only visual, the term landscape became accompanied by newly invented terms such as soundscape, smellscape and feelscape.

Landscape paintings became an important genre in an art market that gradually moved away from religious art and embraced the profane. It obtained a particular popularity in rich Protestant countries, such as seventeenth-century Holland and eighteenth-century England. In their depictions of landscapes, painters gradually developed certain standards, influenced for example by the invention of linear perspective. Not just the depiction of landscapes but also the design of landscapes themselves became an important occupation of the elite. Although some comparable developments can be distinguished elsewhere, for example landscape painting in China and Japan and garden design in South Asia, Denis Cosgrove justifiably described landscape as a 'European way of seeing'.²

The combination of the regional and the visual meanings make landscape a complex phenomenon. In physical geography, (landscape) ecology and geoarchaeology the territorial meaning is still prominent, whereas in art history and in landscape psychology the visual aspect predominates. In human geography, both meanings are combined.

This term 'landscape' with its double meaning has a counterpart in the word *krajina* in the Slavonic languages. This term also started as a synonym for region, but relatively recently also came to be used for scenery. In Romance languages, the word for region is *pays*, whereas the word *paysage* is primarily used for the visual aspect. However, in publications such as Jean-Robert Pitte's *Histoire du Paysage Français*, inspired by William Hoskins' *The Making of the English Landscape*, the *paysage* is also a regional feature.

Over recent centuries, landscapes were exported from Europe to other parts of the world. They were carried by Europeans who travelled elsewhere, to migrate (particularly to the Americas, Australia/New Zealand and South Africa) or to colonise.³ In many parts of the world, Europeans made landscapes based on their experiences at home. Important parts of the world are officially still in-

tegral parts of the EU, like French Guyana, Réunion and the Canary Islands, etc. Even bigger parts of the world are officially part of a European country but outside the EU: Greenland, French-Polynesia and Curaçao, etc. These 'European landscapes elsewhere' are also interesting for this journal, as well as the influence of non-European cultures on the European landscape. Much more recently, the European concept of landscape has gradually become a world-wide feature, stimulated by the World Heritage Convention that redefined landscape and brought a global landscape discourse.

This journal wants to stimulate discussions on the theories and concepts of landscape, as well as the historical developments and different uses of the term landscape.

2. Europe is becoming an important framework for landscape policies

Two major institutions in Europe, the European Union and the Council of Europe, both developed a track record in landscape policies. The Council of Europe approaches landscape from a human rights and cultural perspective, seeing landscape as a means to guarantee every European a living environment of high visual quality but also as a platform for the involvement of the general public in environmental issues. In 2000, the Council published the European Landscape Convention, also known as the Florence Convention. It defines landscape as: 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors', an elegant definition that connects the two different meanings described above. The Convention urges governments to act actively on landscape and to involve the public in planning.⁴

The European Union started as a political project, and has for many decades focused on economic issues, but in recent years has widened its scope to include culture, heritage and landscape. The biggest influence of the European Union on landscape has been through the Common Agricultural Policy that has, since the late 1950s, strengthened developments to increase agricultural production and adapt the landscape to large-scale agriculture. The disadvantages of this policy, such as the production of surpluses and an unprecedented decline in biodiversity and landscape diversity, have brought a number of adaptations since the 1980s. These include subsidies to keep farmers going in 'difficult' areas, the protection of highly valued regional products and the landscapes in which they are produced, as well as for landscape protection.

Of interest also are the new challenges of rewilding, energy transition and making the landscape 'climate-proof' – challenges which will have a large impact on the landscapes of Europe and, particularly, their heritage.

3. Europe is also an increasingly important framework for landscape research

Europe has become an important framework for the research of landscapes. In line with stimulating landscape policies, the European funding frameworks for research have resulted in many international cooperation projects, both in academic research as well as in exchange between research and practice. Usually case studies from different countries are presented in an international perspective. On many occasions these landscapes are re-defined as European landscapes, through which the idea of a diverse yet unified Europe is constructed and confirmed.⁵

The challenge that the myriad of European initiatives on landscape brings to the fore is: what knowledge do they generate and who profits from that new knowledge? The main challenge for many projects, but particularly international consortiums, is that they run out of steam once the funding period is over. Despite good efforts by the funding schemes to demand sustainability, websites are no longer maintained and project outcomes can be hard to obtain. Experience with projects of this kind taught us that finding the synergy between partners is arduous. Often the results of projects take the shape of case studies, but overarching conceptualisations, synthesis or international comparisons are few and far between. This journal aims to stimulate such overarching studies that could deepen our understanding of European landscapes in all their commonalities and variety. Critical reflections on the political agendas on landscape management and planning of current-day Europe are inherently part of this.

Aims of the Journal of European Landscapes

The *Journal of European Landscapes* aims at stimulating and documenting transnational research, with an emphasis on Europe. In the opinion of the editors, there already exist sufficient journals for local and national studies. By focusing on transnational comparative studies, the *Journal of European Landscapes* wants to stimulate debate, research and other forms of international cooperation.

The *Journal of European Landscapes* also wants to document research projects. During recent decades, much research has been conducted that is not properly documented or is even lost when, after a few years, the website goes offline. The editors see the documentation of the main results of such projects as one of its main tasks. By publishing these results in a scientific journal, it enables the academic community to access, discuss and scrutinise the value and meanings of the outcomes for future landscape research, policy and practice.

The *Journal of European Landscapes* aims to offer a platform for interdisciplinary research into landscape. The historical and heritage dimensions of landscape are important, but the spatial, physical, visual, representational, philosophical and other landscape dimensions are also included. In many cases this requires interdisciplinary research across academic disciplines ranging from archaeology, anthropology and art history, to geography, earth sciences, economics, tourism studies and sociology.

The *Journal of European Landscapes* aims to publish studies on the historical and heritage aspects of landscape against the backdrop of challenges that Europe is facing today: the challenges of European unification, migration, climate change, energy transition, increase of tourism, digitisation and urbanisation.

Categories

1. Scientific papers

The *Journal of European Landscapes* will publish articles that transcend national borders and have an internation-

al (comparative) perspective on landscapes. The Journal also welcomes more general and theoretical papers on the concept of landscape.

The focus will be on the history and heritage of European landscapes, including rural as well as urban and industrial landscapes.

2. Short articles on running or recently finished projects

The *Journal of European Landscapes* wants to document and share the outcomes of finished projects on European Landscape, particularly those in which a heritage and history perspective is prominent. This way the outcomes of these projects are re-traceable and the relevance of these projects for the study of European landscapes becomes concrete.

3. Book reviews

The *Journal of European Landscapes* aims to publish reviews of books that address European landscape in their heritage and historical dimensions. By doing so, the journal aims to stimulate discussion and reflection on current European landscape studies' publications.

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Endnotes

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